

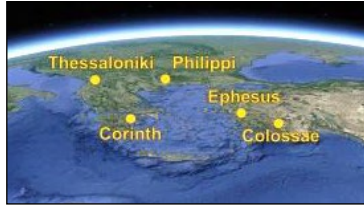
Jasper Jesus

Clear as a Crystal Cornerstone

June 29, 2025



Today we're going to try to learn to be a lot more sympathetic to ... our Savior!



Do you ever feel sorry for God? We should.

I mean **think about what He's had to put up with!** Now, back in the day, the Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians populated the pagan Roman cities that were centers of idolatry and indulgence. And yet, Paul says:

The Lord's message rang out from you ... [and] your faith in God [rather than yourselves] has become known everywhere. ... They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven – 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 NIV

But the Jews in those same cities, rather than turning to the Lord, turned on His ambassadors.

What then shall we [ambassadors] say? [Says Paul. Simply] That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, [as in received it, as] a [gift of] righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. [As in earned it] Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were [attainable] by works. [And so] They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is written: [in Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14] "See, I lay in Zion a Stone that causes men to stumble ["in judgment" (Is 28:7)] and a Rock that makes them fall, ["prostrate at the soles of Your feet" (Is 60:14)] and the one who trusts in Him [for righteousness, "Coming to Him as to a living Stone" (1 Pet 2:4); and the "Rock of my salvation" (2 Sam 22:47)] will never be put to shame." – Romans 9:30-33 NIV



Cuz righteousness *must* be "obtained", cuz it *can't* be "attained", cuz it's gotta be perfect, cuz otherwise, **we can't come into His presence. For that, we need a Rock and a Hand.** Did you know "**presence**" and "**face**" are the same word in Hebrew? Remember when God passed by Moses? His face was off limits.



The Lord said, "I will cause all My goodness [some Bibles say: My beauty] to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name ... But," He said, "you cannot see My face, for no one may see Me and live." ... [So] When My glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove My hand and you will see My back; but My face must not be seen." – Exodus 33:19-23 NIV



Why? Well, remember when they looked into the Ark of the Covenant, in Indiana Jones? And the priest says, "It's beautiful!" and their faces melt off? It's kind of like that. God says, "You'll need a face shield, or ... you'll kind of explode." Because, **when man's impurity meets the full force of God's glory, the reaction is nuclear.** Have you heard of superheated water? It's one of those "urban legends" that's actually true! Water boils by forming bubbles around impurities, called nucleation sites. Which means you can microwave purified water way past its boiling point.

But the *moment* you *add* an *impurity*, like *sugar*, it'll *explode violently*. Likewise, **the blazing intensity of God's holiness instantly obliterates impurity**. The way light destroys darkness. And **you can't attain perfect purity with a few good deeds and religious creeds**. Which is why:



The *sinners* [without a *covering*] in *Zion* [God's *home*] are *afraid*; [even *John*, Jesus' beloved disciple, *falls* at Jesus' feet, *terrified*, when He *appears* like the *sun shining* in all its *brilliance*! (Rev 1:16-17) So *imagine* how] *fearfulness* has seized the *hypocrites*: [saying] "Who among us *can live* with the *continual fire*? Who among us *can live* with *everlasting burning*?" [Do you *find* it *fascinating* that *heaven* and *hell* sound so *similar*? It must be *more* about being *equipped* to *enjoy* the *experience*! Like] He who *walks righteously* and *speaks uprightly* [down here] ... He shall dwell on high; [up there, because] his place of defense shall be the *impregnable Rock* – Isaiah 33:14-16 MEV

God didn't say to *Moses*: "I don't want you to see My face." He said, "You can't see My face ... and live." Unless you're "in the *Rock* and [covered by] My Hand", both of which being "[His] name". You're likely *familiar* with Christ being called the *Rock*; but He's also quite often called ...

... the *Man of Your Right Hand*, [that is] the *Son of Man* whom You have made *strong* for Yourself! ... [So] Give us *life*, and *we will call upon Your name*! – Psalm 80:17-18 ESV

Know who's name this sounds like? Jacob's youngest and most beloved son, **Benjamin**. Whom Jacob literally named the **Son of the Right Hand**, which was shorthand for power and strength.

[So] Save [O God] with Your Right Hand, and answer us! – Psalm 60:5 NAS

[Because] Your Right Hand is lifted high in glorious strength. – Psalm 89:13 NLT

[Because] Your Right Hand is full of [the] righteousness [we need]. – Psalm 48:10 NKJ

Funny thing. In the same chapter, just prior to the story of Moses being hidden in the Rock and covered with God's hand, because no one can see the Lord's face and live, we're told that:

Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. – Exodus 33:11 NLT

So what do you suppose is going on here? It's actually fairly straight forward. In the same chapter, Moses is simply meeting with a seeable form or image of the Lord, that I like to call OT Jesus.

[The Lord said to Moses] I will send My Angel [lit. Messenger] before you" ... And He said, [this Messenger of] "My Presence [lit. My Face] will go with you" – Exodus 33:2, 14 NKJ

[And so] [The Lord] became their Savior ... [because] the Angel of His Presence [lit. Messenger of His Face] saved them; [and] in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; [and] He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. – Isaiah 63:8-9 ESV

"And the Father Himself, who sent Me, [said Jesus] has testified of Me. [But, unlike Moses] You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. ... For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me." – John 5:37, 46 NKJ

[Saying] The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty Hand – Deuteronomy 26:8 NIV

Now I want to remind you [says Jesus' brother Jude] ... that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. – Jude 5 ESV

For it is the God who commanded light to shine ... in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. – 2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJ

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God – Colossians 1:13-15 NKJ

[And so] Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus [as a simple seeable image of His true self] no longer. – 2 Corinthians 5:16 NKJ

Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ... the King of kings and Lord of lords ... who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. – 1 Timothy 6:13-16 NIV



Have you seen the award winning documentary: “The Boy Whose Skin Fell Off”? It opens with Jonny Kennedy’s 36-year-old body being prepared for a funeral, and lying in a coffin, and his voiceover, recorded just weeks prior, says: “That’s me in the box. I’ve come back in spirit. I’ll tell you the story of my life, and my death.” Talk about a tear-jerker! He had a condition that caused his skin to blister and peel at the slightest touch. So he lived a life of constant pain and open sores. And a sense of humor, and faith. But the heartbreaker under it all, is his loving mother who can’t help but hurt him when helping him. There’s an almost unwatchable scene where she gently changes his bandages. And his skin tears. And he swears. And immediately asks for forgiveness. And she describes what it’s like to have a child you love with all your heart, but can’t hold or hug without causing harm. And **she is a picture of our unapproachable Savior’s predicament**. Think of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, (Lk 19:41) or saying how often He longed to gather her children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing. (Mt 23:37) But, **without perfect purification from every impurity, His kids can’t even see His face** – let alone feel His embrace. So feel for Him, and **relate to why He longs for us to obtain and grow in His righteousness**. Which is quite literally the only miracle cure. **The self-aware pagans saw a relational exchange**, wherein we receive by giving. Whereas, **the self-righteous purists saw a transactional negotiation**, and therefore downplayed, to the point of disregarding, their need for the cure.

Which brings us back to the “stone that causes men stumble”. Because Paul only quotes a few words of Isaiah 28:16: “I lay in Zion a stone”, leaving it to us to seek and find the rest of the warning to those who reject God’s Right Hand Rock of refuge, who might as well be saying:

“We have made lies our refuge and under falsehood we have hid ourselves.” Therefore, thus says the Lord God: “See, I lay in Zion a Stone, [and it’s] a tested Stone, [“For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize ... but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb 4:15 HCS) and He’s] a precious cornerstone” – Isaiah 28:15-16 MET

And Isaiah knew *all* about *High Priests* and *precious cornerstones*, because God told Moses to:



"Make the breastplate of judgment. [As a covering for the High Priest] ... [with] four rows of [precious] stones: [the first cornerstone in] the first row shall be a sardius ... [and the last cornerstone in] the fourth row ... a jasper. ... And the [twelve precious] stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel" – Exodus 28:15-21 NKJ

Which is why **the first precious cornerstone, a sardius, was named Reuben, Jacob's firstborn;** and **the last precious cornerstone, a jasper, was named Benjamin, Jacob's lastborn.**

[But] This is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens – Hebrews 8:1 NKJ

[And since He] Placed His Right Hand on [John] and said ... "I am the First [as in "the Firstborn over all creation" (Col 1:15); and "the Firstborn from the dead" (Rev 1:5)] and the Last." [As the "Benjamin" or "Son of the Right Hand" of God] – Revelation 1:17 NIV

It shouldn't surprise us when John says, in "the revelation of Jesus Christ", (Rev 1:1) that:

I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance – Revelation 4:2-3 NKJ

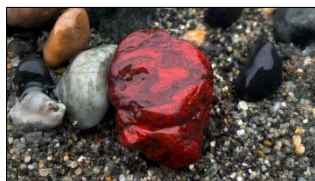
[Because] You shall see ... and the Hand of the Lord shall be known – Isaiah 66:14 ESV

[Because] Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary ... [And, what do you know:] There is Benjamin, [lit. the Son of the Right Hand] the least of them, in the lead – Psalm 68:24-27 ESV

[So] Behold, the Lord's Hand ... [because] His own arm brought salvation for Him; and His own righteousness, it sustained Him. For [instead of a breastplate of judgement] He put on righteousness as a [High Priest's] breastplate – Isaiah 59:1, 16-17 NKJ

Because **our Precious High Priest both brought and bore the judgment on our behalf!** Which is why, when John describes the purified bride of the Lamb having the glory of God, he says:

Her light was like a most precious ... jasper stone, [but] clear as crystal. – Revelation 21:11 NKJ



Because, **Jasper is one of the few precious stones that contains impurities**, which prevent any light from passing through it. But **we're made pure so we can see His face and feel His embrace**. And that way those intense rays can wrap right around us, cuz they'll pass right through us, without causing us any harm. Which might be why we're told, that:

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His faithful ones. – Psalm 116:15 NRS

[Cuz] Your Hand shall lead me, and Your Right Hand shall [finally] hold me. – Psalm 139:10 NKJ

[If] [We] [as His priests] put on the breastplate of faith and love – 1 Thessalonians 5:8 NAS

Which is *all* righteousness basically boils down to. And I hope that clears things up for you.